



CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, CIRENCESTER.

THE church of St. John the Baptist, Cirencester, is considered to be one of the most splendid parochial edifices in the kingdom. It consists of a large body, or nave, seventy-seven feet in length, and seventy-four in breadth, including its lateral aisles; a chancel fifty feet long and twenty-four broad; a rich proportioned tower, 131 feet in height, with enriched battlements, and surmounted by pinnacles at the angles, rises at the west end; and it has handsome porches on the north and south sides: adjoining the body and chancel are five

chapels, dedicated to Jesus, St. John, St. Catherine, St. Mary, and the Holy Trinity. The building, generally, is of the fifteenth century. The windows contain sumptuous specimens of ancient stained glass. The ceiling of the entrance is grained with pendants and beautiful fan tracery.

St. Catherine's chapel, on the north side of the chancel, was founded by Thomas Ruthall, bishop of Durham, in the reign of Henry VIII., and the immediate predecessor of Cardinal Wolsey in that age. This chapel is

fifty-four feet long, and but thirteen wide; the roof is a fine specimen of fan tracery, sculptured in stone. St. Mary's Chapel is forty-seven feet, by twenty-one. Trinity Chapel is a fine example of pointed architecture, with a richly-carved oak ceiling, supported by brackets springing from figures of angels holding shields. These chapels, particularly that of St. Mary, were anciently endowed with great revenues. The monuments are very numerous, and cover the remains of persons of great distinction.

### THE NEW HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

#### SECOND REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS ON THE FINE ARTS.

*To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty.*

WE, the Commissioners appointed by your Majesty for the purpose of inquiring whether advantage might not be taken of the rebuilding of your Majesty's Palace at Westminster, wherein your Majesty's Parliament is wont to assemble, for the purpose of promoting and encouraging the fine arts in your Majesty's United Kingdom, and in what manner an object of so much importance might be most effectually promoted, humbly report to your Majesty, that having, in furtherance of the objects proposed by us in our first report, and sanctioned by your Majesty, invited a competition in cartoons, we have now humbly to state to your Majesty, that the competition referred to has taken place, and that we are satisfied with the evidence of ability afforded, not only by the works of the successful candidates, but by those of many others.

Having satisfied ourselves respecting the attainments of many British artists in the practice of cartoon-drawing, and respecting their capacity to attain excellence in those

qualities which are essential in historical painting, we now propose, in pursuance of the plan before announced by us, to invite artists to exhibit specimens in fresco-painting of a moderate size, which, by being portable, will enable all candidates for employment in that method of painting to send in works exhibiting their qualifications therein as painters and colourists, and which, taken together with the larger compositions in drawing which they have exhibited or may exhibit, and with other existing evidences of their talents, may enable us to proceed to the selection of artists for the decoration in fresco of certain portions of the Palace. Nevertheless, as paintings executed in other methods may be free from a shining surface, and may therefore be deemed by some artists to be fit for the decoration of walls, we have invited such artists to exhibit specimens of the methods in question, and shall regard such methods as open for consideration.

With respect to sculpture, we have announced that various statues will be required for the decoration of the Palace, and we have invited artists to exhibit models, in order to assist us in the selection of sculptors to be employed.

With regard to decorative art of various

kinds — namely, glass-staining, arabesque-painting, wood-carving, ornamental metal-work, and ornamental pavements, we have, in like manner, issued notices inviting artists and others to send in specimens, in order to assist us in the selection of persons to be employed.

We have further humbly to state to your Majesty, that the claims of candidates for employment in oil painting, and other departments of the art besides historical painting, will be considered hereafter, and that the order in which the several branches of art and decoration applicable to the embellishment of the Palace have been considered by us, has been, and must continue to be, determined by the time requisite for the preparation of the works, the study required by the artists in modes of execution which are new to them, and by the progress of particular portions of the building.

We humbly subjoin, as an appendix to this report, some papers treating in detail various matters connected with the subject of our inquiry, and explanatory of the proceedings of the Commission; and, with respect to the architect's report, have to state that we have taken it into our attentive consideration; but although we have, in consequence, issued various notices calculated to assist us in coming